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The Memory of John Robinson:

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT DEDHAM, MASS.

ON SUNDAY, DEC. 21, 1851.

BY ALVAN LAMSON, D.D.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, & COMPANY,
111, WASHINGTON STREET.
1852.

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NOTICE.

To say that this Discourse was prepared without the remotest thought of publication, though in the present case strictly true, would only be to repeat what has been hundreds of times asserted, and always with the same result; for the public does not care a farthing for the motive or intention of the writer in matters of this sort. I will only say, therefore, that I print because two of my excellent parishioners have very kindly requested to be allowed to take on themselves the charge of publication; and I esteem them too highly to withhold my assent. I give the Discourse in two parts, with the connecting clauses or sentences precisely as delivered, thinking it better so than changed. I have added a few notes, which might easily have been extended; but I was unwilling to swell the size of the pamphlet.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,

22, School Street.

DISCOURSE.

EZRA, viii. 21. — THEN I PROCLAIMED A FAST THERE, AT THE RIVER OF AHAVA, THAT WE MIGHT AFFLICT OURSELVES BEFORE OUR GOD, TO SEEK OF HIM A RIGHT WAY FOR US, AND FOR OUR LITTLE ONES, AND FOR ALL OUR SUBSTANCE.

Two hundred and thirty-one years ago, last July, there stood up a preacher before a little band of exiles at Leyden, in Holland, and announced to his hearers this text. That preacher was pastor of the church from the bosom of which came the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed in the "Mayflower." You are aware that I refer to JOHN ROBINSON, sometimes called the Father of the Independents. His connection with the first company of English emigrants * who came to these shores, and settled at Plymouth, — thus leading the way to the settlement, soon after, of Massachusetts Bay, — and his great personal worth, have suggested to me the propriety of devoting this day — the true anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims — to the grateful office of gathering up such memorials of him as can be found, and which may furnish a suitable theme of Christian meditation. The memories of the past, and especially of men who have been faithful to their own high ideal, who have asserted great principles, and the influence of whose lives yet survives for good, serve to elevate our minds above low

* The first who effected a permanent settlement.

and selfish ends, and strengthen in our hearts the love and desire of excellence. They offer, as I conceive, proper subjects for a Christian pulpit, and might perhaps be recalled with profit more frequently than they are, as giving variety and interest to the exercises of the place. Monotony and sameness, it is to be feared, are too often the sin of the pulpit; and a wider range of topics, opening veins of fresh thought, would seem desirable.

As Robinson never crossed the Atlantic, I shall have little or nothing to say of the Pilgrims after they embarked for this country; but, of necessity, their shadows must often mingle with his, as we call him up in England and in Holland, — in the former with dim and flitting outlines, in the latter with great distinctness and individuality. I shall avoid, as far as possible, trodden ground, but must unavoidably sometimes set my foot upon it.

I said that this day is the true anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. The landing took place on the eleventh of December, old style, corresponding to the twenty-first, new style, and not to the twenty-second; the rule requiring, that, in converting old into new style between the dates, 1582, the time of the change, and 1700, ten days be added, not eleven; from 1700 to 1800, eleven days; from 1800 to 1900, twelve days; from 1900 to 2000, thirteen days; and from 2000 to 2100, still thirteen days, — every fourth centesimal year remaining bissextile, or leap-year; the intervening centesimal years, as 1700, 1800, and 1900, being converted into common years, and so the difference in changing dates from old to new style increasing. The necessity of thus dropping three days every four hundred years arises from the difference between the true time of the annual revolution of the sun, which is 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 50 seconds, and 365 days and 6 hours, the time assumed in the old or Julian calendar. The difference amounts to about one day in a hundred and thirty years, or three days in four centu-

ries. In the time of Pope Gregory XIII. the difference had risen to ten days, and these ten were suppressed by reckoning the fifth of October the fifteenth. Future irregularity was to be prevented in the way I have just intimated; that is, by dropping three days every four centuries; and this is done by converting three leap-years into common years. In the old calendar, every centesimal year was a leap-year; now only every fourth centesimal year is leap-year, the intervening three being made common years, the three days being thus dropped, — a method deemed the most simple and convenient. Sixteen hundred remained a leap-year, and, during the century which then commenced, only ten days, as in the closing part of the preceding century, were to be added in changing dates from old style to new; and, the change being once made, the date remained fixed for ever.

The error by which the landing of the Fathers was fixed on the twenty-second of December, instead of the twenty-first, the true date, was introduced in this way: — Early in 1769, a few individuals, inhabitants of Plymouth, formed an association, under the name of the "Old Colony Club," for the purpose, among other objects, of commemorating the landing of the Fathers. With them the custom of observing the day originated. At that time, 1769, the difference had become, for that century, eleven days; and not, as it would seem, attending to the fact that in a date of the preceding century only ten days were to be added, they added eleven, which would have been proper had the date belonged to their own, instead of the preceding, century. The error is of little consequence in itself, and probably in practice will never be corrected; the twenty-second of December having become too firmly fixed in the public mind, as the day of the landing, to be readily changed.*

* See note at the end.

I proceed to my subject, John Robinson, the pastor of the first company of Pilgrims who came to these shores. The sources from which I shall draw my materials are mostly documents by contemporaries of Robinson, and especially Bradford and Winslow, who sat under his preaching, and were members of his church; and some letters of Robinson himself. Bradford joined the church of the Separatists, probably before Robinson became its pastor. He went with the rest to Holland, and came over with the first company, in the "Mayflower," at the age of thirty-two. After the death of Carver, who lived but a few months after the landing, he was, as you know, chosen governor of the colony; which office he held in all thirty years. He left, besides a book of Letters, the Memoir of Elder Brewster, the portion of Bradford's and Winslow's Journal written by him, and a sort of historical dialogue, — the last first published in 1841, in Dr. Young's Chronicles of the Pilgrims,* — a History of the Colony, commencing with an account of the Pilgrim Church, before it left England for Holland, and continued to 1647. A part of this is lost; but the most valuable portion of it has been preserved, in one or another way, and is included in its most authentic form in the Chronicles just alluded to.

Winslow, the second authority named, was not of the original band of Pilgrims who escaped to Holland in 1608, but, being abroad on his travels, fell in with them at Leyden in 1617. He was, as he tells us, three years under the ministry of Robinson in Holland, before the Plantation commenced here, being twenty-two years old when he joined him. He also came over in the "Mayflower." He wrote — besides his share of Bradford's and Winslow's Journal, extending from November, 1620, to December,

* A work which should be found on the bookshelves of every family in the land. It contains the fruits of minute and extensive research, arranged with taste and judgment.

1621 — a work called "Good News from New England," bringing down its history to 1623, published in London in 1624; and, subsequently, an account of the Gorton Controversy, and a "Brief Narrative of the true Grounds or Cause of the First Planting of New England," an exceedingly valuable document, and a work until recently very rare, — republished in the Chronicles of the Pilgrims, in 1841, from a manuscript copy taken from a volume in the British Museum, no copy of the work being at that time known to exist in this country in any public or private collection, though it had been used by some of our earlier compilers and historians. These are contemporary documents of the very highest value. They are among the "earliest chronicles of New England," and present the history of its settlement "written by the actors themselves."

To these I add two small publications of recent date, and not much known; one by Rev. Joseph Hunter, of England, Commissioner of Records, containing the result of very minute inquiries relating to Robinson and his company while in England, published in London in 1849; the other by an American traveller,* and containing the result of similar inquiries and examinations made in Holland, and serving to correct some errors which have been extensively disseminated by historians blindly copying each other, — published in 1846.

We must first look for Robinson in England. What is known or can be gathered concerning him and his company there? and where did he preach? Of his personal history while there, a few facts are all that can be rescued from oblivion; and materials are wanting for constructing a regular narrative. Even the place of his birth is unknown; though the date assigned, calculating from his age at the time of his death, is 1575. The most searching

* George Sumner, Esq. The title of the publication is "Memoirs of the Pilgrims at Leyden," inserted in Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. ix. p. 42, third series.

inquiries have failed of bringing to light any facts relating to his early life or family connections. We only know that he "studied at Cambridge;" where, as it appears from a recent examination of records,* he was entered of Emanuel College in 1592, received his master's degree in 1600, and became bachelor of divinity in 1607. It has been asserted that he and Brewster were together there; but of this there appears to be no certainty. There is no doubt that he was regularly ordained a minister of the Church of England. All which has been heretofore said of his connection with a parish, before he united himself with "Brewster's people," as they are called, is, that he had a benefice in Norfolk, somewhere near Yarmouth. This is very vague and unsatisfactory. The author of the tract on "The Early History of the Founders of New Plymouth, the First Colonists of New England," to which I have referred, has added a little, and but little. He has satisfied himself that the benefice or preferment spoken of was "a vicarage, or perpetual curacy, at Mundham, about fourteen miles from Yarmouth, and about the same distance from Norwich."—"I wish," says this writer, "it could be added, that we found some account of what Robinson did for the people of Mundham; but the information which the History [History of the County of Norfolk] affords us is of the poorest description. He was there in 1600, and also in 1603, where he returned that there were a hundred and forty-four communicants of his parish; and this is all." †

We afterwards find him at Norwich, the capital of Norfolk county. A contemporary writer is quoted as saying, that certain citizens of that place "were excommunicated for resorting unto and praying with Mr. Robinson, a man worthily reverenced of all the city for the grace of

* Gleanings for New England History, by the Hon. James Savage. Hist. Coll., vol. viii. third series, pp. 248, 249.

† Hunter, p. 42.

God in him;" no doubt, our John Robinson. He soon after appears to have left Norwich "in some state of disgust," as my authority expresses it. Another writer is referred to as speaking of "one Master Robinson, who, leaving Norwich malcontent, became a rigid Brownist." * We must not attribute too great importance to such expressions used by the enemies of the Separatists. There was much, however, to embitter their spirits, and no doubt they were sometimes wanting in meekness. Certain it is, that Robinson was more narrow and bigoted at this period of his life than afterwards. I may as well quote here what is said of him by Baylie, a Scotch writer, and a bitter inveigher against the Brownists and Independents. He acknowledges that Robinson was "a man of excellent parts, and the most learned, polished, and modest spirit that ever separated from the Church of England; that the Apologies he wrote were very handsome; that, by Dr. Ames and Mr. Parker, he was brought to a greater moderation than he at first expressed; that he ruined the rigid separation, — allowing the lawfulness of communicating with the Church of England in the word and prayer, though not in the sacraments and discipline; that he was a principal overthrower of the Brownists, and became the author of Independency." †

The commencement of his connection with Brewster's

* Hunter, p. 42.

† Prince, 173. The Dr. Ames here referred to was William Ames, author of the "Medulla Theologiæ," and other theological works of repute in their day; an Englishman, who, flying from persecution, became minister of the English church at the Hague, afterwards theological professor at Francker, was a member of the synod of Dort, and finally preacher to the English congregation at Rotterdam. He designed to come to New England; but his death, in 1633, prevented. His widow and children removed the next spring to this country, bringing with them his valuable library. — Robert Parker, also a Puritan divine, became his companion in exile. Neal says that he would have been chosen minister of the English church at Amsterdam, but the magistrates were "afraid of disobliging King James." He became minister of a garrison at Doesburg, where he died in 1630.

people is referred to 1606 or 1607. I must here pause to give some account of the origin and previous history of this company, over which there has hitherto hung no little obscurity. The early Puritans, it is well known, were not separatists from the Church of England. Their era properly begins in 1550, when Hooper, being nominated to the bishopric of Gloucester, refused for a time to be consecrated in the old ecclesiastical habits. They desired a farther reformation of the church; its purification especially from what they conceived to be the superstitions of Popery, in regard to ceremonies, vestments, and the like. In their ranks were found many eminent churchmen, — as Jewel, Grindal, Sandys, and others. Elizabeth, who was fond of pomp and ceremony, and who therefore retained what many of her subjects disliked, as in their view Popish observances, only contributed to widen the breach which had before commenced. They who wanted a simpler worship, "something," as one expressed it, "more filed from rust, and purer," were finally driven to separation; and their enemies fastened on them the name of Puritans, or Precisians. They did not assume it.

For their forms of church-government, worship, and discipline, they professed to go to the New Testament, and to the practice of the primitive churches. So, in respect to doctrines, their grand fundamental principle was, that, for them, Christians must go to the Bible, which they regarded as addressing itself directly to the individual reason and conscience. They did not admit the authority of any human church to interpret it for them. These principles constituted them Separatists, or Independents. These principles, they contended, were as old as Christianity. They were the principles which guided the ancient Christians of the first and purest ages; and in defence of them they were ready to "go to prison and to death," as some of them did.

Of these Separatists was Brewster's company, or church, gathered, according to Morton, in 1662; probably, however, too early a date by four or five years. Bradford, who was one of them, speaks of them as on the borders of Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire; being composed of persons from towns and villages in each of those counties. Others have contented themselves with calling them "of the North of England," and, more recently, as the "Lincolnshire Church," with most provoking indefiniteness. But not only is the place, the town, or village, where the church had its principal "seat or centre," now ascertained with a good degree of certainty, but the very house where its meetings were holden, and where Robinson preached. They had no church-edifice. Bradford says that "they ordinarily met at the house of Brewster on the Lord's day, which was a manor of the bishop's; and with great love he [Brewster] entertained them when they came, making provision for them to his great charge, and continued so to do whilst they could stay in England." This reference to "a manor of the bishop's" has led to a discovery of the place, and the building occupied. The place is Scrooby, a village in Nottinghamshire, about a mile and a half from a post and market town called Bawtry, on the borders of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, and six miles from the nearest point in the county of Lincoln. The manor was once a palace of the archbishops of York, somewhat noted, where Wolsey, after his fall, passed some weeks. In 1576, Dr. Edwin Sandys, then archbishop of York, granted long leases of it to one of his sons; thus virtually alienating it from his see, for which and other similar acts he has not escaped censure. The building was ample for such a congregation of worshippers as were likely to meet there. It went gradually to decay, and "no portion of it is now standing; yet the site may be traced by a few irregularities in the surface of the ground." *

* Hunter, pp. 7—11.

Here, then, we are to look for the Brewsters; and here we find them. They appear to have been under-tenants of the Sandys family. William, elder in the church there, as he continued to be, as you know, in that portion of it which finally removed to this country, had received a University education, and was at one time one of the under-secretaries in the office of the unfortunate secretary Davison, Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth, and the victim of her hypocrisy and meanness. When Davison was sent on an important mission to the Low Countries, "in the Earl of Leicester's time," says Bradford, Brewster accompanied him, and was much trusted. It is mentioned to his credit, that he did not desert his master in the time of his "troubles, when he was put from his place about the death of the Queen of Scots," and by a heavy fine reduced to poverty. He is supposed to have retired to Scrooby about 1587 or 1588, where he occupied his time chiefly in religious matters; looking out "good preachers," and "doing much good in the country where he lived."

"It is possible," says the English writer, Hunter, "that those who are previously unacquainted with this portion of history will expect to find [in Brewster] some rough and uncouth person, ignorant of the world, disliking the church because the church disliked him, and seeking a distinction which did not naturally belong to him by the easy path of peculiarity in his religious profession and practice. Nothing, however, can be more unlike the true picture of this remarkable man, little remembered as he now is in the country which gave him birth, and little known as is the place of his long abode, and the circumstances of his varied life. He was evidently a man whom [?], for his birth, his social position, his education, his energy, his reflective cast of character, and his general virtues and attainments, no body of persons need to be ashamed to own that they have been actuated by influences springing from him."*

* Pp. 21, 22.

Here, too, we now trace, in old records, the birthplace of his fellow-laborer, William Bradford, which there has been so much difficulty in fixing. Mather, in his Magnalia, by a mistake of the printer, it is supposed (perhaps of Mather himself), assigns Ansterfield as the place of his birth; and so subsequent writers have given it. But in all England no place of that name could be found. It now appears that he was born, not at Ansterfield, but Austerfield, a village about three miles from Scrooby.

Here, then, we find the company, Brewster and Bradford of the number, calling themselves Separatists, though their enemies attempted to fasten on them the odious name of Brownists. Robinson was now their pastor.* All who came in the 'Mayflower' were not then with them. Winslow, as before observed, Miles Standish, and some others, joined them in Holland. But we must pause a little longer at Scrooby, where, and in the vicinity, generally at Brewster's house, as I said, but at other places also, they met for worship, as it would seem peacefully. But they were not unmolested. Brewster and some others were fined; and they were in various ways harrassed for setting up separate worship. Bradford gives a sad picture of their sufferings. They were "hunted and persecuted," he says, "on every side, so that their former afflictions were but as mole-hills to mountains in comparison to these which now came upon them. For some were taken, and shut up in prisons; others had their houses beset and watched night and day; . . . and the most were fain to fly and leave their houses and habitations, and the means of their livelihood."

* Richard Clifton was also at this time connected with the Pilgrim Church as pastor or teacher. Bradford describes him as a "grave and reverend preacher." He went with the rest to Holland, being then, in Bradford's phrase, "a fatherly old man," with "a great white beard." Forced into exile in old age, he "bore his lot patiently;" but, being settled at Amsterdam, and thus aged, he was "loath to remove any more." When Robinson and his company, therefore, left for Leyden, he chose to remain where he was. He died at Amsterdam.

Seeing no hope of a better condition at home, they now turn their eyes to the Low Countries, where "they heard there was freedom of religion for all men." In the fall of 1607 and spring of 1608, they "resolved to get over into Holland as they could." They dreaded the removal to a "country which they knew not but by hearsay, where they must learn a new language, and get their livings they knew not how," — "seeing they were not acquainted with trades and traffic," but "had only been used to a plain country life and the innocent trade of husbandry." Yet they had courage to make the attempt; for they "rested on God's providence," says the narrator Bradford, and "knew whom they had believed;" though to some "the adventure seemed almost desperate, and a misery worse than death."

It is a fashion with some, profoundly ignorant of history, at this day, to deny that the Puritans were ever oppressed and persecuted. Nothing can be more palpably false. Several Acts of Parliament bore very hard upon them, and especially upon the Separatists. One, passed early in the reign of Elizabeth, directed originally against the Catholics, but made equally applicable to the Puritans, insisted on uniformity under penalty of "forfeiting goods and chattels for the first offence, of a year's imprisonment for the second, and imprisonment during life for the third," .... and "a fine of one shilling on all who should absent themselves from church on Sundays and holidays."* The Acts went on, increasing in severity; and the High Commission Court was a terrible tribunal. As people and clergy began to withdraw from the church, and establish separate worship, from their extreme dislike of the ceremonies, in regard to which the queen would allow of no relief, these laws were executed with new rigor. Late in the reign of Elizabeth, an Act was passed by which all persons above the age of sixteen absenting themselves from the Church of the Estab-

* Hallam's Constitutional History of England, vol. i. p. 152.

lishment for the space of one month, unless they made the requisite submission and declaration of conformity, (which many could not conscientiously do), "were to abjure the realm; and, if they should return without the queen's license, to suffer death as felons."* Multitudes now began to escape, and flee to Holland and other places. In 1603, early in the reign of James, by a canon which received the king's sanction, persons affirming "that any of the Thirty-nine Articles .... are in any part superstitious or erroneous" were by the very act of affirmation to be excommunicated, and consequently to become, besides suffering in other ways, incapable of being witnesses in a court of justice, or of recovering debts by a legal process, and be denied Christian burial.† Other canons were equally severe; but I am happy to add, that the courts of law hesitated, and sometimes refused to execute them according to the letter.

This was but four or five years before Robinson's church resolved, as I said, to "get over to Holland as they could." But difficulties were thrown in the way of their embarkation. They could not stay, yet were not suffered to go,— as it happened afterwards, when many wished to transport themselves to America, but were prohibited. "The ports and havens," says Bradford, "were shut against them," so that they were compelled to "seek secret means of conveyance, to fee mariners, and pay extravagant rates for their passages." And then they were "betrayed," and "they and their goods surprised and intercepted," and subjected

* Hallam, i. 288.

† Ib. 412. Neal's History of the Puritans, i. 238, ed. Choules. The canons, one hundred and forty-one in number, several of them absolutely outrageous, passed in both houses of Convocation, and were ratified by the king under the great seal; but, not having been confirmed by Act of Parliament, the courts of Westminster had several times decided, that they were binding only on the clergy, the people not having been represented in Convocation. Still the Puritans suffered severely under them.

to various outrages. They had great trouble in getting over; but I cannot here recount the pathetic story of their disappointments and sufferings. Robinson himself, and some others among their principal men, remained to the last to help the weakest over before them. They met at Amsterdam.

So their pilgrimage began. "I think," says Hutchinson, "that I may with singular propriety call their lives a *pilgrimage*. Most of them left England about the year 1609, — young men between twenty and thirty years of age. They spent near twelve years, strangers among the Dutch, first at Amsterdam, then at Leyden. After having arrived at the meridian of life, the declining part was to be spent in another land among savages, of whom every European must have received an unfavorable, if not a formidable idea." *

It is to be observed, that the term "Pilgrims" belongs exclusively to the Plymouth colonists. It is never by accurate writers applied to the Massachusetts colonists. The Pilgrims, or Plymouth Colony, were Separatists; the Massachusetts Colony was mostly composed of Puritans, who had not before left the national church.

I wish I had space to give you Bradford's description of the first impression made on the minds of the Pilgrims on

* History of Massachusetts, vol. ii. Appendix, p. 405, ed. 1795. There is another passage in this Appendix which may be worth quoting here, for its singular justness of thought and right appreciation of the Plymouth men. After speaking of Brewster, Winslow, and others of the company, of whose personal history something was known, the historian adds: "These were the founders of the colony of New Plymouth. The settlement of this colony occasioned the settlement of Massachusetts, which was the source of all the other colonies of New England. Virginia was in a dying state, and seemed to revive and flourish from the example of New England. I am not preserving from oblivion the names of heroes, whose chief merit is the overthrow of cities, provinces, and empires, but the names of the founders of a flourishing town and colony, if not of the whole British empire in America," p. 412. This was published in 1767.

arriving in Holland, — a world so different from that they had been accustomed to look upon. But I forbear. They went not for gold and "jewels of the mine," but to enjoy their religion in quiet. They opened their meetings, and Robinson continued to preach. On arriving at Amsterdam, they found, besides the older congregation of Separatists under Johnson and Ainsworth, the one recently established under Mr. Smith, a popular preacher, but unstable. This society falling into contention, Robinson and others, to avoid the infection, advised a further removal; and, in 1609, the Pilgrims go to Leyden, after having stayed at Amsterdam one year.

At Leyden, which Bradford calls "a fair and beautiful city," and where there was a University and learned men. Robinson led no idle life. He preached three times a week, and, in addition, became a somewhat prolific writer. Between the time of his arrival at Leyden and the departure of the Pilgrims for America, he published several works on topics of deep interest at the time, and which still possess an historical value. His "Justification of Separation from the Church of England," in answer to Bernard's invective called the "Separatists' Scheme," came out in 1610. Four years after, he published a work on Religious Communion, and other matters then in controversy; and, five years later, a work in Latin, being an apology for "certain Christians reproachfully called Brownists or Barrowists," among whom were Robinson's own people, — a work afterwards translated into English.

The Arminian disputes were now rife in Holland, and especially at Leyden. Arminius, who was a professor of theology in the University, had recently died, — a man of "an amiable temper and pure life," whose motto was, "A good conscience is paradise." Some time after his death, the learned Episcopius, his pupil, became divinity professor, and defended his opinions. With the latter, Robinson,

according to Bradford and Winslow, held several disputations in public, by which, to use Bradford's phrase, he "became terrible to the Arminians," and acquired great credit with learned men there; though in such cases, both sides, as you know, usually claim the victory. Bradford says, that he "put Episcopius to an apparent *nonplus* in public." If so, it was no small triumph, for a keener disputant than Episcopius has rarely lived; but probably the friends of Episcopius would give a different account. There is an anecdote worth relating given in connection with the cool, argumentative powers of Episcopius. He once held a dispute with a champion of the opposite sentiments in Latin, by which he made many converts among those who knew not a word of the language. One plain burgher, in particular, is mentioned as becoming convinced of the truth of Episcopius's doctrine; and, being asked how he could judge, as they spoke in Latin, of which he knew not a syllable, he replied, "The first who becomes angry — he, I know, has lost." *

Of these disputations no notice has been preserved in the records of the University. Still there is no reason to doubt, that Robinson was, even there, among the learned men of Leyden, a person of mark. He was admitted a member of the University in 1615, which gave him some privileges. Bradford intimates that "some public favor" would have been shown him, but that the Dutch feared giving offence to England. This might be; for James I., who then occupied the throne, was fond of meddling in theological controversies, and exercised no small influence in the Low Countries, both in civil and ecclesiastical matters. He drove one learned man from his professorship at Leyden, and attempted to procure his banishment, and prevented another from being elected, and "seems," says one, "to have kept an ambassador at the Hague chiefly to inform

* Sumner's Memoirs, &c., p. 58.

him of the progress of the theological disputes in that country." *

Some brief notice of the condition of Robinson and his people at Leyden may here seem desirable. Many came over from different parts of England, and joined them there; so that, according to Bradford, "they grew a great congregation," a very indefinite phrase. Winslow says that the "difference was not great" between those who stayed and those who came over — as I understand him — in the first ship. As to their external condition and means, Bradford says, that "they fell to such trades and employments as they best could,† valuing peace and their spiritual comfort above any other riches whatsoever;" that, with hard and continual labor," they raised "a competent and comfortable living." In another place he speaks of their "condition for the most part as very low and hard." "For many of them had lain long in prison," and had been much abused; and at last coming into the Low Countries, and "wanting money, trades, friends, or acquaintances, and languages to help themselves, how," he asks, "could it be otherwise?"

They "lived together," says Bradford, "in peace and love and holiness," — "lived together in love and peace all their days." Winslow, in reply to some aspersions cast upon them by the Scotch writer, Robert Baylie, intimating or asserting that a part of them went to New England, because they could not agree to live together in Holland, — that there were dissension and strife among them, — says. "Never people on earth lived more lovingly together, or parted more sweetly, than we, the church at Leyden, did." "There was no breach between us that went and the brethren that stayed, but such love as indeed is seldom found on earth." Again, "The foundation of our New England plantations

* Young's Chronicles of the Pilgrims, p. 42, note.

† Bradford became a silk-dyer; and Brewster, a teacher, and afterwards a printer.

was not laid in schism, division, or separation, but upon love, peace, and holiness, — yea, such love . . . as is seldom found on earth;" the phrase being reiterated. About the time of their coming away, their peaceable lives were, by the magistrates of Leyden, in the place of public justice, held up as an example to the Walloons of the French Church, whose "strifes and quarrels," say they, "are continual." There were contentions in the congregation of Ainsworth and Johnson, which went to Amsterdam from London and the parts adjacent some years before Robinson left England, and in that of Smith, which went but a short time before from the North of England, with some of whom Robinson's people had been acquainted. But from these Robinson wisely kept aloof; and it was chiefly to avoid Smith, as before said, that he advised leaving Amsterdam for Leyden. "Falling into some errors," says Bradford, "in the Low Countries," he and his people, "there for the most part, buried themselves and their names." — "His and his people's condition may be an object of pity for after-times." Robinson's congregation was always peaceable, loving, and helpful, one of another.

Here, then, at Leyden, Robinson now lived and labored, a faithful, friendly man. He gave direction and counsel, not only in spiritual but in "civil matters," by which he was "very helpful to their outward estates, and so was in every way as a common father unto them." And none "more offended him" than those who were "close and selfish," and "retired from the common good," and such as "would inveigh against the evils of others, and yet be remiss in themselves." His worth and wisdom they all felt; and they "esteemed him highly while he lived and labored among them; yet much more after his death, when they came to feel the want of his help, and saw by woful experience what a treasure they had lost, . . . yea, such a loss as they saw could not be repaired." It is a beautiful

picture which these old writers, both parishioners of Robinson, draw of the pastor and his flock.

But I must here pause. I am unwilling to distract the attention of any of you by presenting any other topic this day; and I have more to say than either your patience or my strength would justify me in attempting to utter this morning. You will therefore pardon me, if, contrary to the rule I have invariably prescribed to myself, I for once, after the manner of the former days of New England, divide my discourse in the middle, and defer the remainder till the afternoon. I shall then speak of Robinson's last days, death, and burial.

We this morning followed Robinson, pastor of the Pilgrim Church, from England to Leyden in Holland; and I spoke of his and his people's condition there. I concluded by remarking on the beautiful picture which the old writers present of the pastoral relation between him and his flock. Such was their reciprocal love and respect, says one of these writers, "that it might be said of them as it was once said of Marcus Aurelius and the people of Rome, that it was hard to judge whether he delighted more in having such a people, or they in having such a pastor."

But where did they worship? Had the Pilgrims a church granted them in Leyden to worship in? None of the old writers, Bradford, Winslow, or others, mention any; and no one prior to the annalist Prince, who says, that, when he was at Leyden in 1714, the most ancient people there told him, as matter of tradition, that the city "let them have one of their churches," in the chancel of which Robinson lay buried, and which the English still enjoyed.*

* Page 238.

Subsequent writers generally adopted Prince's statement. Mrs. Adams, wife of the first president Adams, in a letter dated 1786, says, "I visited the church at Leyden in which our forefathers worshipped, when they fled from hierarchical tyranny and persecution. I felt a respect and veneration, upon entering the doors, like what the ancients paid to their Druids."*

Yet there is now reason for believing, that Prince was misled, in some particulars certainly, and, as the author of "Memoirs of the Pilgrims at Leyden," referred to at the commencement of my discourse, contends, in all. The informants of Prince, he maintains with great show of reason, must have confounded the Separatist or Pilgrim congregation with a society of English Presbyterians, which, by a singular coincidence, was established there within a few months of the arrival of the Pilgrims, and had a church granted it, as the old records of the place, which have been carefully inspected, prove. But none of these records, nor the "voluminous histories of Leyden," in which the history of each church and of the "small chapels" is given separately, mention the grant of any church to the Pilgrim congregation; which the fear of giving offence to England might very naturally have induced the Dutch to withhold, though, from the known industry and honesty of the Pilgrims, they were fond of dealing with them in matters of business. The building or chapel shown to American travellers as the "old church of the English," and regarded with veneration as the Church of the Pilgrims, is supposed by this writer to be that belonging to the society of Presbyterians referred to, which had a known historical existence.†

* Vol. ii. p. 150.

† "It is certain," says Mr. Sumner, in the Memoirs, "that this church, whose pastor from 1609 to 1616 was Robert Duric, was the only English congregation which in 1714 had a public place of worship at Leyden, and it is the only one that is noticed by the different historians of Leyden as having ever possessed a church." "At the time of Prince's visit to Leyden, in 1714,

At all events it is certain, that the remains of Robinson were not buried there, as Prince asserts on the authority of local tradition. The error is very readily accounted for by the length of time, nearly a hundred years, which elapsed between the death of Robinson and the visit of Prince, and the fact that an English congregation of Presbyterians worshipped there, which might be easily mistaken for the Separatist congregation. The writer whose authority I am using infers that the Pilgrims either worshipped in some "hired hall," or, what is more probable, in the house of Robinson himself, which, according to the testimony of Winslow, was large, and was used for the feast prepared for the Pilgrims at their departure. We know from other testimony that private houses were used as "places of preaching" by different sects in Holland.

With Robinson at their head, and in the condition I have described, the Pilgrims struggle on from 1609 to 1617, when they begin to entertain serious thoughts of removing elsewhere. The reasons, which are set down at length in Bradford's and Winslow's narratives, you will not expect me to repeat. There is something sad in these few sentences of Bradford: "They found and saw by experience the hardness of the place and country to be such, as few, in comparison, would come to them, and fewer that would bide it out and continue with them. For many that came to them, and many more that desired to be with them, could not endure the great labor and hard fare, with other incon-

this congregation, under the pastoral care of Robert Milling, was worshipping in a chapel formed of part of the ground-floor of the *Falyde Bagyn Hof Kerk*." It had, by grant of the magistrates, occupied two chapels before that here referred to, — that of St. Catherine's Almshouse from 1609 to 1622; and, from 1622 to 1644, the Jerusalems Hof. In the year last named, it removed to the Bagyn Hof (Beguine Cloister), "a part of the church of which it occupied till 1807," when, its last pastor dying, "the congregation was dispersed." Of all these old grants and changes, very minute records remain. Memoirs, &c., p. 49, and note, p. 63.

veniences, which they underwent, and were contented with. But though they loved their persons, and approved their cause, and honored their sufferings, yet they left them as it were weeping, as Orpah did her mother-in-law Naomi, or as those Romans did Cato in Utica, who desired to be excused and borne with though they could not all be Catos. . . . Yea, some preferred and chose prisons in England rather than this liberty in Holland with these afflictions."

Young and old alike were sinking under their burdens; the place, too, was licentious and full of temptation; they would lose their language and name if they stayed, and their children would grow up imperfectly educated. These and other reasons, and not, as it is expressed, any "newfangledness, or other such like giddy humor," led them to turn their eyes towards some of the remote unpeopled regions of the American continent whither Robinson was to accompany them.

Some, transported in imagination by Sir Walter Raleigh's glowing description of the beauty, fertility, and delights of the recently discovered Guiana, where was "perpetual spring" and ever "flourishing greenness," wished to go to that tropical region; but the idea was not acceptable to the majority. They were determined against returning to England; for, say they, in a letter which bears the signature of Robinson and Brewster, but was, no doubt, written by Robinson, — "We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother-country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange and hard land;" and, "It is not with us as with other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves home again." Three years pass before a place is decided upon, and a patent obtained, which, after all, was never used. They then hold a Fast, and Robinson preaches an animating discourse, fitted to encourage their hearts, from the text, — "And David's men said unto him, See, we be afraid here

in Judah. How much more, if we come to Keilah, against the host of the Philistines! Then David asked counsel of the Lord again." They decide how many and who shall go first; for "all that were willing could not get ready quickly." The greater number, being to stay for the present, require their pastor to remain with them,—their elder, Mr. Brewster, to go with the others; those who go first, who, it was decided, should be the "youngest and strongest," to be "an absolute church of themselves, as well as those that stay; with this proviso, that, as any go over or return, they shall be reputed as members without further dismission or testimonial; and those who tarry, to follow the rest as soon as they can." Had a majority gone over first, the pastor was to have gone with them.

When ready to depart, they hold another Fast, and Robinson preaches from the text I have recited at the head of this discourse. The Pilgrims used what was called the Geneva Bible, a version made by the English exiles in the reign of Queen Mary, and brought it with them to this country; King James's version having been but a little before published, and not having gone into general use.* The text in the Geneva version reads thus: "And there, at the river, by Ahava, I proclaimed a fast, that we might humble ourselves before our God, and seek of him a right way for us, and for our children, and for all our substance." It was at the conclusion of his discourse at this time, as it has been generally taken for granted,† that Robinson delivered his celebrated farewell address, which was reported by Winslow, one of his hearers. Winslow reports it in the third person, which Mather‡ and others, if they used the Winslow document, changed to the first, thus restoring the vivacity of the

* Chronicles of the Pilgrims, p. 14, note.

† What can be said in opposition may be found in Sumner's Memoirs, &c. page 70.

‡ Magnalia, p. 14, ed. fol. 1702.

original. I should do injustice to Robinson, if in a tribute to his memory, however slight, on this occasion, I failed to give this address, which many of you have heard or have read, but which I offer no apology for presenting entire. With great justice, Prince, in his annals, speaks of it as containing "words almost astonishing in that age of low and universal bigotry which then prevailed in the English nation; wherein this truly great and learned man seems to be almost the only divine who was capable of rising into a noble freedom of thinking and practising in religious matters, and even of urging such an equal liberty on his own people. He labors to take them off from their attachment to him, that they might be more entirely free to search and follow the Scriptures." *

"Brethren," says he, "we are now quickly to part from one another, and whether I may ever live to see your faces on earth any more, the God of heaven only knows; but, whether the Lord have appointed that or not, I charge you before God and his blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

"If God reveal any thing to you by any other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded, I am very confident, that the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of his Holy Word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw. Whatever part of his will our good God has imparted and revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things.

* Page 176.

"This is a misery much to be lamented; for, though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God; but, were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received. I beseech you remember it is an article of your church-covenant, 'That you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God.' Remember that, and every other article of your most sacred covenant. But I must herewithal exhort you to take heed what you receive as truth. Examine it, consider it, and compare it with other scriptures of truth before you receive it; for it is not possible that the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick antichristian darkness, and that perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.

"I must also advise you to abandon, avoid, and shake off the name of Brownist. It is a mere nickname, and a brand to make religion, and the professors of it, odious to the Christian world."

Well might they wish to throw off the offensive name of Brownists. Brown's reputation would help no cause. And they were not Brownists, and had never had any thing to do with him, "whose person," says Bradford, "they never knew, and whose writings, few, if any of them, ever saw." Brown was originally of a good family, being connected with Lord-treasurer Cecil, who repeatedly extricated him from difficulties. Fuller, the church-historian, says that he had a "vehemency of utterance," which "passed for zeal among the common people, and made the vulgar to admire, the wise to suspect him." The truth is, he was a great brawler, violent and troublesome. He made it matter of boasting that he had been in thirty-two prisons. The historian Fuller, who was born within a mile of the place where he for a time had a pastoral charge, says that, when a young man, he had often seen him; that he "was of an imperious

nature, offended if what he affirmed but in common discourse were not instantly received as an oracle." He adds, that in his time he "had a wife with whom for many years he never lived, and a church in which he never preached." * He afterwards became reconciled, or professed to be, to the national church. In his latter days he sunk into obscurity and contempt, and finally died in jail, into which he had been thrown, when above eighty years old, for striking a constable.

But to return to Robinson. The address was followed by prayers, accompanied by many tears. The ship being now ready that was to bear them away, says Winslow, "they that stayed at Leyden feasted us that were to go, at our pastor's house, being large; where we refreshed ourselves, after tears, with singing of psalms, making joyful melody in our hearts, as well as with the voice, there being many of the congregation very expert in music; and indeed it was the sweetest melody that ever mine ears heard."

"And the time having come that they must depart," most of the brethren accompany them to the place of embarkation. "So they left," says one of them, "that goodly and pleasant city, which had been their resting-place near twelve years. But they knew that they were Pilgrims;" and, lifting their eyes to heaven, "their dearest country," their spirits were "quieted." The night was spent with little sleep; the next morning came the "sad and mournful parting," tears streaming from all eyes, strangers among the Hollanders joining in the weeping; the pastor, who was to stay behind a little time, "falling on his knees, and they all with him," commending them to "the Lord and his blessing." They then, "with mutual embraces and many tears," took their leave one of another, which to many of them proved to be their last. They met not again on earth.

* Church History, vol. iii. pp. 61—65, ed. 1837.

I do not follow them. I am now concerned only with Robinson, and with the rest but as they stand connected with him, who is the representative of a great principle, — that of religious freedom and progress, which breathes through every word of his noble address.

Robinson desired to come to this country, — expected to come; but necessity prevented. He had yet five years more to labor on in where he was. These he passed in performing his duty to those who could not get over, in writing letters to that part of his flock who had come, and in composing works for the press, two of which were published after his death. He was a man of many labors, of a peaceful spirit, in his letters a counsellor of peace and harmony, and continually softening and growing more liberal as years passed over him; an effect which it is always delightful to witness. He may have been a fiery youth; he was certainly at one period chargeable, as I said, with something of narrowness and bigotry; but his virtues ripened with time, and we forgive all for the sake of the rich fruits he bore in his age. He would not, after his arrival in Holland, allow those who joined his church in their confessions to inveigh against the Church of England; but they were to profess a separation from the world, "leaving the Church of England to themselves and to the Lord, before whom they should stand or fall." Members of the reformed churches generally, French, Dutch and Scotch, were admitted to communion in his church.

I have little more to add respecting him. The part of his flock who were better provided with means, and the most eminent of them in gifts, had crossed the Atlantic. Those who remained were in general the poorer, the old, and more feeble; a part too poor to come without aid, which their brethren on this side of the water were unable to afford them; though they did, from time to time, help over several of those they had left behind, at an expense to

themselves they could ill bear. Robinson himself appears to have been disappointed in the hope of assistance from England, and remained to watch over the portion of the company which stayed, to share their sufferings and comfort them in their sorrows, till his spirit was taken to a better world. We read with a melancholy interest certain passages in his letter to the Pilgrims who had safely reached these shores, and had survived the first fatal winter.

In a letter to the church at Plymouth, dated June, 1621, he says: "My continual prayers are to the Lord for you; my most earnest desire is unto you; from whom I will not longer keep (if God will) than means can be procured to bring with me the wives and children of divers of you and the rest of your brethren, whom I could not leave behind me without great injury both to you and them, and offence to God and all men. The death of so many of our dear friends and brethren [alluding to the mortality of the first winter after the landing], oh! how grievous hath it been to you to bear, and to us to take knowledge of! which, if it could be mended with lamenting, could not sufficiently be bewailed. But we must go unto them, and they shall not return unto us."

In a letter addressed to Brewster in 1623, he speaks of their "languishing state" in Holland, and the "deferring of their desired transportation," — "desired," he says, "rather than hoped for;" for there was "no hope at all" of any new funds "to be raised for that end," unless something could be sent by the colonists. He utterly despaired of any further help from the adventurers in England, some of them being "honestly-minded," and others unfriendly, and exerting a malign influence; alluding doubtless to the notorious John Lyford, and the faction that listened to him. At this time, then, 1623, Robinson had well-nigh despaired of ever getting over with the remainder; and what anguish must have preyed on his spirit can be more readily con-

ceived than described. One of them, writing from Holland after his death, says, "I know that he would have accepted the worst conditions to come to you;" that is, if the others could be got over. It is added, "If we come at all unto you, the means to enable us to do so must come from you." The colonists did what they could; and it must have greatly added to their distress that they could do no more.

The last scene was now rapidly approaching. A letter comes, bearing date April 28, 1625, bringing the sad intelligence that the faithful and beloved pastor was no more. He fell sick on Saturday the 22d February, preached twice the next day, and died the first of March, at the age of about fifty. "If either prayers, tears, or means would have saved his life," says the writer, "he had not gone hence." He remained "sensible to the very last," with "little or no pain." The letter speaks of their low state: they had now no church-officer left, but still kept together. This, however, was not long. The death of Robinson caused a dissolution of his congregation at Leyden: some of them succeeded in coming here; others went back to Amsterdam. The congregation at Plymouth were as yet without a pastor, having waited in hope of Robinson's coming till they received tidings of his death.

Prince, as I said, gives it as a tradition, that his remains were buried in the chancel of the church then, in 1714, occupied by the English congregation: he adds, from the same source, that "the magistrates, ministers, scholars, and most of the gentry, mourned his death as a public loss, and followed him to his grave." I have already said, that this tradition is, in some particulars, not to be relied on. The latter part of it (the pomp and ceremony of the funeral) may, however, have been called in question without sufficient reason. It is confirmed by Winslow's narrative, though it is true that it is mentioned by no other ancient

writer. Winslow was not in Holland at the time, but might obtain information from the part of Robinson's congregation who afterwards came over, respecting the funeral rites. He says, that, "when God took him away from them and us by death, the University and ministers of the city accompanied him to his grave with all their accustomed solemnities, bewailing the great loss that not only that particular church had whereof he was pastor, but some of the chief of them sadly affirmed, that all the churches of Christ sustained a loss by the death of that worthy instrument of the gospel." I do not attribute any weight to the argument, that, as the plague was then raging at Leyden, all public funerals were suspended. An exception might have been made in the case of one so loved and respected. We know that Robinson did not die of the plague. The writer of the letter announcing his death says expressly, "I thank the Lord he was free of the plague, so that all his friends could come freely to him."

Of the place of his burial there seems now to be some certainty. The writer of the "Memoirs of the Pilgrims at Leyden" says that after weary search he "at last, in a small closet attached to the cathedral-church of St. Peter, full of old dust-covered volumes, fell upon one which contained a record of the receipts of the different churches in Leyden, from 1619 to 1629;" most of these receipts being for "burial-fees;" that, in the list for 1625, the year of Robinson's death, he found a receipt for his interment in that same St. Peter's Church. This account is confirmed by the general "Record of Burials"* at Leyden, which gives the fourth of March as the day of Robinson's interment (he died, you remember, on the first), and says that he was buried in St. Peter's Church. The date given in the church-book for the receipt of the fees is the tenth of

* Gravenboeck; now "deposited among the archives at the Stadt House." Memoirs, &c., pp. 55, 56.

March. These minute records of the day, recently brought to light, are somewhat curious. The amount paid, too, is of some significance, it seems. The present administrator of the affairs of the churches in Leyden, who, says my authority, "is well acquainted with the mode of interment at different periods," states that the fees paid in Robinson's case — nine florins, about three dollars and sixty cents of our currency — indicate the humblest burial, being in fact only the hire of a grave* under the pavement of the church for seven years; the bodies so deposited being, at the expiration of that term, removed. The poverty of Robinson and his congregation at the time renders this account very credible. Many have had humbler graves; and it matters little where the dust is deposited, after the spirit has passed on to a higher world.

Few men have been more sincerely mourned than was Robinson by that pilgrim-company, or have deserved a more honored remembrance. One of his hearers, whom I have repeatedly quoted, writing some years after his death, says of him, that "he was a man not easily to be paralleled for all things;" his "singular virtues" were "well known both by friends and enemies;" he was "a man learned and of solid judgment, and of a quick and sharp wit;" but of "a tender conscience, and very sincere in all his ways; a hater of hypocrisy and dissimulation, and would be very plain with his best friends. He was very courteous, affable, and sociable in his conversation, and towards his own people especially." He was "an acute and expert disputant, very

* In "one of a large number of square pits, containing space sufficient for four coffins." The Church of St. Peter is the oldest in Leyden, and seems to have been much used for burial. On the monuments contained in it are found some distinguished names. In the book of burials, Robinson, there called "Roelends," is described as "preacher of the English sect, by the Belfry;" the latter expression referring to the place of his residence, which, with the profession of each person interred, is given in the Gravenboeck. Memoirs, &c., pp. 56, 71.

quick and ready." — "He was never satisfied in himself until he had searched any cause or argument he had to deal in thoroughly and to the bottom; and," adds the writer, "we have heard him sometimes say to his familiars, that many times, both in writing and disputation, he had sufficiently answered others, but many times not himself," and he was "ever desirous of light."*

Some time after his death, his widow and children came to New England. Prince, in his annals, says that he had often seen his son Isaac, and that he was above ninety years old at the time of his death. He lived at Scituate in 1636; and in 1639 removed to Barnstable, where he left male posterity.†

I shall regard this as a lost day, and my labor as utterly vain, if, from this account of Robinson and the Pilgrim

* Bradford's "Dialogue, or the Sum of a Conference between some Young Men born in New England, and sundry Ancient Men that came out of Holland and Old England." Chronicles of the Pilgrims, pp. 451, 452.

Among the earlier notices of Robinson in works printed in Holland and Germany, I find, in Mr. Sumner's note on the subject, only two which are of any particular value. Hoornbeeck, in a work published at Utrecht in 1653, twenty-eight years after Robinson's death, speaks of him as "minister of the Leyden Separatists," and the "best among the Brownists," — "beyond others distinguished for probity and learning." He refers to the softening influence of Ames and Parker. Another writer, Horn, in his Ecclesiastical History, printed at Leyden in 1687, mentions several of the Separatists, and says of Robinson that he "restored" their "languishing and expiring" cause; he pronounces him "the most learned and modest of all the Separatists;" through the influence of Ames and Parker, he says, he ceased to hold the opinions of the rigid Separatists, and "founded the sect of Semi-separatists." He was the "true author," he says, "of Independency (now Congregationalism) as then existing in Old and New England." Memoirs, &c., pp. 72, 73. Both these authorities are referred to by Dr. Young.

Mr. Sumner says that the "former presence" of the Pilgrims in Leyden "is now quite unknown to most of the learned men of the University."

† I know not on what authority the Rev. Dr. Allen, in his Biographical Dictionary, asserts that John, another son of Robinson, lived at Cape Ann, and had a son Abraham, who lived to the age of one hundred and two years. The statement has met my eye in no other writer.

company, who, from reverence for freedom and religious principle, forsook country and friends for a life of wandering, privation, and hardship, and unknown graves in foreign lands, — we derive no holy or quickening influence. What moral enthusiasm, what strength of conviction, and firm reliance on Providence, did it require to stimulate to such efforts, and enable the mind to bear up under such a crushing weight of evil! Do not their faith and earnestness put us of these effeminate days to shame? They came nobly out of their great conflicts, and sowed the seeds of empire here, — came for freedom, not for gold, the great stimulant to enterprise now, that peoples a land far away. They were the beginning of New England; and it is New England, by its institutions, its principles, and its influences, which has made this country what we now behold it. Their virtues, their earnestness, their fidelity to their convictions, are deserving of perpetual remembrance. I pity those who can discern no merit in those suffering Pilgrims; who can speak of their faults with a light tongue, or allude to them only to utter a flippant sneer at their narrowness. Faults every one admits they had; but to see only their faults, to be blind to the great worth of their character and deeds, argues a mind, I must say, in my opinion, far more narrow and bigoted than theirs, and there is less excuse for it. We find some apology for them in the barbarities of their age, and the cruel sufferings which were inflicted on them, which might very naturally have the effect of exasperating their spirits, and producing a degree of intolerance. Yet intolerance was not confined to them; it was characteristic of the times; and they never manifested the persecuting spirit which exhibited itself in the Massachusetts Colony.* They attached importance to trifles, it is said; but in their view they were not trifles. Under what

* Hutchinson's Massachusetts, vol. ii. p. 421.

others deemed such, they saw great principles; and for principles they contended; and pitiful must be the mind which cannot see, or seeing will not acknowledge it. They contended for principles. Happy for us if we had one half their earnestness, their zeal, their unflinching trust. May the lesson of their faithfulness not be lost upon us! Let us be as true to the light we enjoy, — the light of the present age, — as they were to that which spread its dimmer rays around them, and we shall be better than, I fear, we now are, and a blessing from Heaven will rest upon us.

I conclude with an allusion to the origin of Mrs. Hemans's hymn, to be presently sung, on the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers; a lyric which has as much truth as poetical beauty in it. It does justice, but no more than justice, to the principle which animated the little band through all their wanderings, — from the time they left their "pleasant homes in England," till they found an unmarked grave in the American wilderness. The account has probably met the eye of many of you, but is worth repeating, in substance, here. The gifted poetess herself related the facts to an American traveller.* "Should you like to know," said she, "how I came to write the song?" — "It was thus: I purchased two volumes at the bookstore, and brought them home; and, as I laid them on my table, my eye was attracted by their envelope, which proved to be eight pages, octavo, of an address delivered at Plymouth on some anniversary.† There was no titlepage and no date. The excel-

* Rev. Chas. Brooks: speech at the dinner of the Cape Cod Association.

† The oration referred to I presume to be that of the Hon. Edward Everett, delivered at Plymouth, Dec. 22, 1824. Judging from what the author of the poem says of the beauty of the typography, taken in connection with the very graphic description of the voyage and landing, — beginning, "Methinks I see it now, that one solitary, adventurous vessel, the 'Mayflower' of a forlorn hope,' &c. on p. 53 of the original edition, — I feel no hesitation

lence of the paper and the beauty of the type first arrested my attention; but how this stray fragment got to Ireland, I could never ascertain. I began to read, and I found it contained an entire description of the fact of landing; and so beautiful was the painting, and so thrilling the fact, that I could not rest till I had thrown them into verse. I took off my bonnet, seized my pen; and, having read and re-read the story, I caught the fire from this transatlantic torch, and began to write; and, before I was aware, I had finished my poem."

Thus was this beautiful ode, which has now become a precious home-lyric in New England, struck off at a single heat, in one of those moments when genius, under the spell of a great idea or powerful emotion, works, it knows not how, and gives forth to the world an imperishable record of its inspiration. To such trifling incidents do the highest creations of the poetic imagination — over which time shall have no power — often owe their birth. The author's own comment on the line, —

"Freedom to worship God,"

was, "It is the truth there which makes the poetry." Yes, in this case certainly, truth is the poetical element. The

in pointing to the passage as the "transatlantic torch" at which the poetess "caught her fire."

The following passage from the apostrophe to the fathers, with which the speaker concludes, has acquired new significance during the quarter of a century and a little more which has elapsed since the oration was delivered: "Victims of persecution! how wide an empire acknowledges the sway of your principles! Apostles of liberty! what millions attest the authenticity of your mission! Meek champions of truth! no stain of private interest or of innocent blood is on the spotless garments of your renown! The great continents of America have become, at length, the theatre of your achievements; the Atlantic and the Pacific, the highways of communication, on which your principles, your institutions, your example, are borne. From the oldest abodes of civilization, the venerable plains of Greece, to the scarcely explored range of the Cordilleras, the impulse you gave is at length felt."

lives of those men, indeed, though they understood it not, was one great epic, which will go sounding on through all time. Sorrowful they went forth on their way; but no laurel that binds the conqueror's brow is now so fresh and green as theirs; and, in comparison with that sweet impassioned hymn, the "trumpet that sings of fame" would but feebly echo their worth. For obscurity and contempt, they have now world-wide renown; and the spot which first received their weary feet shall indeed be "holy ground" for ever. They came as exiles; and the land they sought has now become, for all the world, the exile's home.

NOTE.

Thacher, in his "History of Plymouth" (p. 25, note), notices the error, and makes the reference to the Old Colony Club, of which he gives the history (pp. 179—198). He is the only writer connected with the subject, whether historian, orator, commentator, or poet, in whom I have found any intimation that the twenty-second is not the true day. Were any appeal to authorities necessary to show, that, in dates between 1600 and 1700, the difference between the reformed and the unreformed calendars is ten days only, they could be readily given. Thacher's note, with references, may be consulted; also the "Encyclopædia Americana," and Supplement, art. "Epoch;" and "Brewster's Edinburgh Encyclopædia," art. "Chronology."

Since the delivery of the discourse, I have consulted an article in the "Companion to the British Almanac for 1845," written by Augustus De Morgan, Esq., Mathematical Professor in University College, London, from which I give the following extracts: "The time which elapses between two entries of the sun into the vernal equinox is 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 50 seconds. The calendar of Julius Cæsar takes this as 365 days, 6 hours, and accordingly allows an additional, or 366th, day to every fourth year. This makes the average year to be $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, which is too long by 11 minutes, 10 seconds. This will be found to make 400 years too long by about 3 days; so that the error may be nearly corrected by reducing 3 leap-years in 400 years to common years. The mode of doing this was by neglecting to make leap-years of the *anni Domini* which end with 00, unless the preceding figures are divisible by 4. Thus 1600 is leap-year, but 1700, 1800, 1900 are not leap-years; 2000 is leap-year, but 2100, 2200, 2300 are not leap-years. In the Julian calendar, every year is leap-year which is divisible by 4; in the Gregorian calendar, the exception is, that the years which close centuries (or end with 00) are not leap-years, unless they are divisible by 400. This correction still leaves the year a little too long, by about a day in 3600 years."—pp. 11, 12.

"The difference of the styles is the difference of names given to the same day in the reformed and unreformed calendars. The reformation suppresses ten days to begin with, and so puts the reckoning ten days

forward; moreover, it puts it one day forward for every leap-year which it turns into a common year, as soon as February 28 of the reduced year is past. Thus from 1582, October 5, of old style, October 15 of new style, up to 1700, February 28, old style, March 10, new style, the addition is ten to the day of the month. But in old style there is such a day as February 29, 1700, which there is not in the new style; hence, from the last day named in both styles up to 1800, February 28, old style, March 11, new style, the difference of styles is eleven days; and so on. At present it is twelve days." — p. 33.

The most exact information I have met with, in regard to the time at which the reformed calendar was introduced in different countries, may be found in "The Chronology of History," by Sir Harris Nicholas, pp. 32—36 (Lardner's Cab. Cycl.). "In Russia and Greece," says the writer, "the Gregorian calendar is still (1833) rejected, and they adhere tenaciously to the old style, which is also the case throughout the East." — p. 34.

As an illustration of the force of popular prejudice and superstition, Professor De Morgan states, that, "when in England, in the eighteenth century, it [the change from old to new style] was at last introduced, the mob pursued the minister in his carriage, clamoring for the days by which, as they supposed, their lives had been shortened; and the illness and death of the astronomer Bradley, who had assisted the government with his advice, were attributed to a judgment from Heaven." — *Companion to British Almanac for* 1845, pp. 12, 13.

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